

CATHERINE'S LITERARY WORK

the soul herself pass into His side, ^(C) bathed in his own blood, which availed as though it were the blood of the Son of God." But, as the soul thus entered and began to taste the divine sweetness, "she turned to me, even as the bride, when she has come to her bridegroom's door, turns back her eyes and her head to salute those who have accompanied her, and thereby to show signs of thanks. Then did my soul repose in peace and quiet, in such great odour of blood that I could not bear to free myself from the blood that had come upon me from him. Alas, miserable and wretched woman that I am, I will say no more ; I remained on earth with the greatest envy."¹

Ordina quest amore> O tu che m ami*, sang Jacopone da Todi: " Set this love in order, O thou that lovest Me." Following out this Franciscan line, Dante had based his *Purgatorio* (which symbolizes the whole life of man) upon the need of ordering love rightly. And it is the same with Catherine. " The soul," she says, " that loves disordinately becomes insupportable to herself." Only the Creator may be loved for Himself alone and without any measure. Too readily may a spiritual love for a creature become entirely sensual, if the eye is not kept fixed on the blood of Christ crucified,² And this love disordered grows up into the monster of self-love, *amore froprio*, which plays the same part in Catherine's doctrine as did the *Lttpa*, the she-wolf of Avarice, in the *Divina Commedia*. "Self-love," she writes, "which takes away charity and love of our neighbour, is the source and foundation of every evil. All scandals, and hatred, and cruelty, and everything that is untoward, proceed from this perverse root of self-love ; it has poisoned the entire world, and brought disease into the mystical body of Holy Church and the universal body of the Christian religion." ⁸ And she makes magnificent use of

¹ Letter 273 (97), corrected by the Harleian MS.

^a Letter 76. Cf. the curiously interesting Letter 245 (122), "to a Genoese of the third order of St, Francis, who had engaged in a spiritual friendship with a woman, whereby he endured much travail." I find in the Casanatense MS. 292 that this tertiary was a certain Fra Gasparo.

⁸ *Dialog*), cap. 7.